

an ideal assessment tool – they provide assessment information that can also guide instruction.

Putting Fluency Assessment to Work in Schools and Classrooms

How do fluency assessments fit into the larger reading curriculum? How often should fluency assessments be administered? Who should administer them? How should the results be shared with parents? These are common questions posed by teachers when considering assessment. Teachers often have good ideas on how to assess, but have difficulty in fitting assessment into the larger curricular picture.

The fluency assessments presented in this booklet have three important characteristics useful to teachers. They are quick and easy to administer, easy to understand, and reflect the three components of fluency as well as more general measures of reading proficiency. These other measures are often more complex and time-consuming than the ones discussed here.

In addition, these fluency assessments are ideal for initial screening of students. In an hour or two, often during independent student work time, a teacher can assess each child in the classroom using the methods and procedures outlined. During the first week of class, teachers can have each child read a grade-level passage for one minute and generate measures of decoding accuracy (percentage of words read correct), rate (WCPM), and interpretive fluency from that reading. This can be part of a larger personal assessment in which teachers gain insight into students' interests in reading and other academic areas. This initial fluency assessment gives teachers baseline information against which to measure subsequent progress. Students who score poorly on this initial assessment may be referred to a reading specialist for further, more in-depth testing.

Fluency assessments are good to share with parents because they reflect student performance on passages students should be expected to read successfully – passages at their assigned grade level. Parents whose children are struggling with reading are often told the

Figure 4
Multidimensional Fluency Scale

Use the following scales to rate reader fluency on the dimensions of expression and volume, phrasing, smoothness, and pace. Scores range from 4 to 16. Generally, scores below 8 indicate that fluency may be a concern. Scores of 8 or above indicate that the student is making good progress in fluency.

Dimension	1	2	3	4
A. Expression and Volume	Reads with little expression or enthusiasm in voice. Reads words as if simply to get them out. Little sense of trying to make text sound like natural language. Tends to read in a quiet voice.	Some expression. Begins to use voice to make text sound like natural language in some areas of the text, but not others. Focus remains largely on saying the words. Still reads in a quiet voice.	Sounds like natural language throughout the better part of the passage. Occasionally slips into expressionless reading. Voice volume is generally appropriate throughout the text.	Reads with good expression and enthusiasm throughout the text. Sounds like natural language. The reader is able to vary expression and volume to match his/her interpretation of the passage.
B. Phrasing	Monotonic with little sense of phrase boundaries, frequent word-by-word reading.	Frequent two- and three-word phrases giving the impression of choppy reading; improper stress and intonation that fail to mark ends of sentences and clauses.	Mixture of run-ons, mid-sentence pauses for breath, and possibly some choppiness; reasonable stress/intonation.	Generally well phrased, mostly in clause and sentence units, with adequate attention to expression.
C. Smoothness	Frequent extended pauses, hesitations, false starts, sound-outs, repetitions, and/or multiple attempts.	Several "rough spots" in text where extended pauses, hesitations, etc., are more frequent and disruptive.	Occasional breaks in smoothness caused by difficulties with specific words and/or structures.	Generally smooth reading with some breaks, but word and structure difficulties are resolved quickly, usually through self-correction.
D. Pace (during sections of minimal disruption)	Slow and laborious.	Moderately slow.	Uneven mixture of fast and slow reading.	Consistently conversational.

Source: Adapted from "Training Teachers to Attend to Their Students' Oral Reading Fluency," by J. Zutell and T. V. Rasinski, 1991, *Theory Into Practice*, 30, pp. 211-217.